Ruling on taking payment for interpreting dreams

[English]

حكم أخذ الأجرة على تعبير الرؤى والمنامات

[اللغة الإ ليزية]

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What is the ruling on taking payment for interpreting dreams?.

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible for the one to whom Allah has given the gift of interpreting dreams to accept payment for doing that. This is for a number of reasons:

Firstly:

Interpretation of dreams is something that may be useful but there is no certainty about that and there is no way to measure its benefit, and payment can only be accepted in return for work that has a clear and well known benefit. In this regard it is akin to working as a judge.

Ibn Qudaamah said concerning judges: As for seeking payment for that, it is not permissible. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It is not appropriate for the Muslim judge to receive payment for passing judgement. This is the view of al-Shaafa’i and we do not know of anyone who disagreed with him… and because it is work that is not measurable. End quote.

Al-Mughni, 11/377

Secondly:

The closest analogy to dream interpretation is issuing fatwas. The majority of scholars are agreed that it is not permissible for the mufti to accept payment for his fatwa whether his giving the fatwa is an individual obligation or a communal one.

It says in al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (32/42):

With regard to payment, it is not permissible to accept it from any of those who sought a fatwa, according to the more correct view of the Shaafa’is. This is also the view of the Hanafis and Hanbalis. The Hanbalis said that because issuing fatwas should be done for the sake of drawing closer to Allah and because it is conveying something from Allah and His Messenger, so it is not permissible to accept compensation for it. If he were to say to him: I will not teach you about Islam or wudoo' or prayer unless you pay me, they said: this is definitively

haraam and he has to give back the payment and not take possession of it. They said: He has to give an answer free of charge for the sake of Allah, verbally or in writing if the enquirer asked for an answer in writing, but he is not obliged to provide the paper and ink. End quote.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: if he accepted payment, that is not permissible for him, because issuing fatwas is conveying from Allah and His Messenger, so it is not permissible to accept payment for it. End quote.

I'laam al-Muwaqqi'een, 4/231

Dream interpretation is a kind of issuing fatwas.

Shaykh al-Sa'di said:

Knowledge of dream interpretation is one of the branches of Islamic knowledge and a person will be rewarded for learning it and teaching it. Interpreting dreams comes under the heading of fatwas, because Yusuf used a verb related to the word fatwa when he said to the two young men in prison, "Thus is the case judged concerning which you both did inquire (tastaftiyaan)" [Yusuf 12:41], and the king said to Yusuf, using a word from the same root, "Explain to me (aftooni) my dream" [Yusuf 12:43], and the young man said to Yusuf (interpretation of the meaning): "Explain to us [aftinaa] (the dream) of seven fat cows" [Yusuf 12:46]. So it is not permissible to interpret dreams without knowledge. End quote.

Tafseer al-Sa'di, 1/407

Thirdly:

It is not permissible to draw an analogy between accepting payment for interpreting dreams and accepting payment for ruqyah, because ruqyah comes under the heading of remedies and treating disease, and it is permissible to ask for payment for them according to scholarly consensus.

Fourthly:

Although some people say that it is permissible to seek payment based on what is mentioned in Majma' al-Anhar (3/533), where there is a discussion on accepting payment for acts of worship, he says: … unlike building mosques, paying zakaah, writing out Mushafs, fiqh, teaching people how to write, astronomy [meaning learning astronomy in order to work out directions and times from the stars], medicine, dream interpretation and literary arts, and it says that it is permissible to accept payment for all of these according to consensus –

this conclusion is not quite right, because what is meant by teaching dream interpretation is not interpreting dreams per se, based on the fact that it is mentioned in conjunction with teaching fiqh, writing, medicine and literary arts.

This is clarified by what it says in al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah (4/448), which is a Hanafi book, where it says: If he asks for payment in return for teaching his child how to write or about the stars or medicine or dream interpretation, that is permissible according to scholarly consensus.

The difference between teaching knowledge of dream interpretation and interpreting dreams is like the difference between teaching Islamic knowledge and issuing fatwas and shar'i rulings.

Shaykh Ibn Jibreen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on accepting payment for dream interpretation?

He said:

We think that it is not permissible, because dream interpretation relies on speculation; it is not permissible for the interpreter to give a definitive interpretation, because of the possibility that there may be a different interpretation other than what this interpreter thinks, so there is no reason to take payment for that. End quote from the shaykh's website [in Arabic]:

http://ibn-jebreen.com/ftawa.php?parent=786&subid=711&view=vmasal

And Allah knows best.